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1 September 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Rural Population Control

REFERENCE: SEA Analysis Report, August 1967

1. Attached hereto are copies of the pertinent pages (11-16) of the August 1967 SEA Analysis Report, and their accompanying back-up tables and graphics. This is the material Mr. Rostow mentioned with such interest earlier in the week. As you can see from skimming the report, his interest was obviously whetted by the report's thesis that the GVN's population control figures continue to show increasing government control of population residing outside the six autonomous cities* -- i. e., increasing government control of the rural population.
2. This analysis of rural population control progress represents an attempt by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Systems Analysis, to derive meaningful trends from the constantly fluctuating statistics on population control. We are leery of the August 1967 report's conclusions, however, since we feel the data base used for this analysis and the analytical techniques applied to the problem, require considerable refinement before they reach an acceptable level of accuracy or reliability.
3. The data used in the OASD analysis does not originate from the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES), formerly known as the "Allen Grid," but from a GVN source. The HES data base is not yet firm enough to support detailed conclusions and, in any case, does not yet extend far enough back into the past to permit analysis of movement or progress over time. Nevertheless, the HES system has already turned up and pinpointed enough inaccuracies and anomalies in the GVN's present system of reporting population control to warrant the exercise of considerable caution in drawing firm conclusions from trends extrapolated from GVN statistics.

* The six autonomous cities are Saigon, Vung Tau, Dalat, Cam Ranh, Hue and Danang.

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4. You will note that the OASD comments are backed up by computerised graphic presentations. We feel that these graphics are based on a number of shaky mathematical operations that significantly reduce the utility of this technique as an analytic tool. A major problem lies in the way GVN population control categories are weighted to determine an absolute number of GVN-aligned residents. The percentages used in this weighting process are completely arbitrary and though they produce index figures that may have some value in deriving trends over time, they are quite misleading when presented as a static picture of the situation at any given moment. Furthermore, the OASD method of relating graphic areas to population densities produces even wilder distortion. Thus, for example, because of the weight arbitrarily assigned to what is claimed to be the GVN-aligned population of Tay Ninh province, War Zone C -- a major Communist base area -- is shown as almost entirely controlled by the GVN.

5. Efforts to improve the quality of computer-assisted, graphic analysis are underway within OASD and also within Harvard University, where the concept was developed. The aggregations necessary for the analytical procedure, however, has led this office to question the utility of the OASD-Harvard method, at least insofar as Agency responsibilities are concerned. Currently, this office is collaborating with OASD, DIA, and the Weapons System Evaluation Group, in an effort to develop more accurate and thorough analytical systems based on an integration of MES data with the environmental and operational factors that determine pacification progress. Within the next four to six weeks we hope to have a new method, largely based on MES, which will produce reasonably reliable control figures valid both as static presentations and as ways of deriving genuine trends projected over time.

George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

cc: DDCI
DDI
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The Director

George A. Carver, Jr.

Attached is an informal comment on the SEA Analysis report that has Mr. Rostow so excited. This was prepared yesterday for your information. An expanded version, coordinated with our DDI colleagues, will be sent to Rostow this afternoon.

George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment

- 1 - Pacification Measurement
- 1 - WH Special Projects
- 1 - VAS Chrono
- 1 - GAC Chrono ✓